



Idaho Department of Labor Agency Summary

The Idaho Department of Labor offers a multitude of employment-related programs and services in seven major categories: Administrative Services, Career Information Systems, Communications & Research, Disability Determinations, Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance, Wage and Hour and Workforce Development.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES maintains department accounting and budget control systems, agency human resource functions and "as assigned" duties from the divisions of Financial Management and Human Resources and the department's information technology systems - all in compliance with state and federal requirements.

COMMUNICATIONS & RESEARCH provides a broad range of state and local data on past, current and projected labor market conditions, including the monthly unemployment rate. Employment, unemployment, demographic, income and other statistics are key economic indicators produced in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. The division also establishes Idaho's average weekly benefit amount and the average tax rate for employer-paid unemployment insurance taxes and monitors the health of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. In the future, the division is being challenged to maintain the abundance, quality and timeliness of labor market information in the face of persisting cuts in the federal support for department programs.

DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS makes determinations regarding medical eligibility for Social Security disability benefits. Careful attention is given to arriving at accurate and timely decisions that minimize medical case costs with the goal of consistently exceeding Social Security Administration targets for case receipts, case clearances, productivity and accuracy. In the future, the service will be challenged to maintain its performance levels in the face of federally-mandated operating changes.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES provides a broad array of labor exchange services for job seekers and employers both electronically and through its staff at 24 local offices across the state. Idaho's job seekers and employers are matched by an online automated system using skills, experience requirements, salary preferences and geographic specifications. To increase efficiency through technology, agency computers use telephone auto-dialers, which are programmed to call applicants after office hours with information about job openings. The federal Wagner-Peyser Act provides base funding of about \$6.5 million annually for most labor exchange or employment service functions, and the department is committed to continuously enhancing its products and services for job seekers and employers.

Oversight is provided by the Idaho Workforce Development Council and local employer committees. Currently, nine employer committees are established throughout the state with employer members in excess of 2,400.

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Employment Services Cont'd.

To help businesses find workers and workers find good jobs, the department operates Workforce Investment Act programs, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, various training initiatives, migrant worker programs and veterans outreach. In the future, the department remains challenged by continued cuts in federal operating grants for both general employment services and for veterans outreach even as spot shortages of specific work skills begin showing up across the state, reinforcing the need for training and job matching services.

IDAHO CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEMS (iCIS) has been providing career and educational planning solutions since the early 1980s. Its clients include various school districts that pay to receive information and data from hundreds of sources formatted so people can:

- Explore career opportunities;
- Find educational programs, and the schools that offer them, related to those opportunities;
- Make successful career decisions and educational plans;
- Find work.

The *CIS Advisory Board* is made up of teachers, counselors, administrators, career consultants and others. Relocation of the Career Information Systems staff to the Idaho Department of Labor is complete. CIS and Labor staff are working on a number of potential efficiencies to improve performance and carry out the workload including staff support from Labor for a vacant analyst position and providing programming and system support for CIS.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE provides partial replacement of wages to people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. The employer-financed trust fund finances these payments, which help maintain a qualified labor pool during slack times for businesses. The department administers benefit distribution and collection of the supporting tax from the state's 50,000+ covered employers. The department also recovers several million dollars in fraud and benefit overpayments each year by using various tactics including cross-matching claimants with driver's license information.

WAGE AND HOUR defines the department's responsibilities for administering Idaho's wage payment, minimum wage and other state labor laws. The division collects unpaid wages for workers, educates employers on wage and other labor laws and maintains the registry of farm labor contractors. Updating the state's antiquated child labor laws and maintaining closer scrutiny of farm labor contractors are major future challenges for the division.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT helps dislocated workers become re-employed and prepare disadvantaged youth and adults for entry into employment. The federal Workforce Investment Act establishes the one-stop service delivery infrastructure and provides funding to train the targeted groups. The department also administers Idaho's Workforce Development Training Fund and a new Incumbent Worker Revolving Loan Fund. The department coordinates a broad array of employment and training programs and delivers those services to employers, job seekers and students with universal access, customer choice, program integration and customer satisfaction as the guide.

Programs offered under the Workforce Investment Act and training provided through the employer-financed Workforce Development Training Fund are cornerstones of this effort. The major challenges looming in this area again deal with the erosion of federal funding.